Delay in Import of Cranes by the Railways

1790. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister of Railways has received any communication from some Members of Parliament, drawing her attention to the delay caused deliberately in the import of cranes and other related matters; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof together with the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The key issues covered in the letter of the Hon'ble M.P are:—

(i) delay in indigenous development and manufacture of 140 Tonne cranes;

(ii) delay in relief and rescue work at Ghaisal accident; and

(iii) cancellation of order on M/s Kirow for 1 NO. 140 Tonne crane for Konkan Railway;

The position is as under:—

(i) Constant efforts are being made to maximise the indigenous production of cranes in Railway workshops in association with public and private sector Jamalpur workshop of Eastern Railway has already turned out 3 Nos. 140 Tonne indigenous cranes and one more crane is expected to be manufactured by 31.03.2000. It is planned to manufacture about 4 cranes per year from 2000-2001 depending upon the need to replace the existing low capacity steam cranes and availability of funds.

(ii) The work of extricating the injured passengers and removing the dead bodies from the debris of coaches involved in accident at Ghaisal, was carried out expeditiously by the Railway doctors and other railway employees with the assistance of Civil Administration. There was no delay in clearing the coaches involved in accident for restoration of through running of train as adequate number of cranes were available at the accident site well in time.

(iii) Procurement of 140 T cranes in mid eighties was made through the process of global tendering in which M/s Kirow (earlier M/s Takraf) also participated but their offer was not found technically suitable. With a view to avoid multiplicity of designs which poses the problem of inventory control, indigenisation of spares, maintenance/ operation etc., it was decided that Konkan Railway should not introduce an additional model of crane (Kirow's design). Maintenance of a stand alone crane without indigenous support of maintenance spares is not only difficult and expensive but also fraught with the problem of large downtime and huge inventory of emergency spares.

Service of Sub-Standard Food in Trains

1791. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sub-standard food is being served in Mahananda Express, North-East Express, Brahmaputra Mail;

(b) whether it is also a fact that neither any rate chart nor any receipt is given to passengers;

(c) whether the quantity of food is always shorter than the prescribed scales; and

(d) the action proposed by Government to render better service to passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir.

(d) Railways have taken a number of steps to improve catering services in running trains. These include standard meals served in hygienically packed casseroles, use of branded products and use of eco-friendly material for serving beverages, curd etc. Display of rate list, issue of cash memos and serving of meals as per prescribed scales is mandatory. Besides regular checks, special drives are launched from time to time and deterrent action taken against the defaulting licences/staff.